

# I

## CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES SECTION 8 HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS PROGRAM

842 Bethel Street, First Floor

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Telephone: 527-5909 Fax: 527-5545 TDD: 527-5947

1000 Ulu'ohi'a Street, Ste. 204

Kapolei, Hawaii 96707

Telephone: 692-5815 Fax: 692-5816 TDD: 692-5814

### Background

The Section 8 Tenant-Based Assistance Program, which provides rental assistance for low income families, was established by the federal government and is administered by the City and County of Honolulu under contract with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). In Honolulu, the Program began in 1975 with the Certificate Program and expanded with the Voucher Program in 1985. Effective October 1, 1999, the Certificate and Voucher Programs merged into the Housing Choice Voucher Program. Implementation of the merged program began with new families entering the program and existing Certificate and Voucher families who were offered new leases or moved to a new unit. The remaining families receiving rental assistance under the Certificate and Voucher Programs are being converted to the Housing Choice Voucher Program at their annual reexamination beginning October 1, 2000.

### Factors of Eligibility

To be eligible for the program, the applicant family must:

- 1) meet current income limits (see below)
- 2) fall within the definition of a family (see below)
- 3) provide a Social Security Number or certify they don't have one for all family members six years or older
- 4) furnish evidence of citizenship or eligible immigrant status

### Income Limits at Admission

The program is designed to provide rental assistance to income eligible families at or below very low (50% of the median income for the City and County of Honolulu) income limits set by HUD. As of October 1, 1999, not less than 75% of new admissions must have incomes that are at or below the extremely low (30% of the median income set by HUD for Honolulu) income limits.

The current income limits by number in the household are as follows:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
50%	\$23,000	\$26,300	\$29,550	\$32,850	\$35,500	\$38,100	\$40,750	\$43,350
30%	\$13,800	\$15,750	\$17,750	\$19,700	\$21,300	\$22,850	\$24,450	\$26,000

Incomes of all members of the household are considered, e.g. income from employment, welfare, SSI, Social Security, VA, retirement, dividends, etc.

## II

### Definition of Family

The Section 8 Program is primarily to help families. A family is defined as:

1. Two or more persons related by blood, marriage or law or have evidenced a stable family relationship (including single individuals, with no other children who are pregnant or in the process of securing legal custody of any individual under 18 years of age).
2. Handicapped and disabled persons who are unable to engage in substantial gainful employment.
3. Single persons 62 years of age or older.
4. Persons displaced by government action or occurrence of a fire/natural disaster (time limit).
5. Remaining member of an eligible family.
6. Single individuals who are not elderly, disabled, or handicapped.

### Rent, Housing Subsidy, and Family Share of Rent

The amount of rental assistance each family is eligible to receive is based on a payment standard (maximum subsidy based on family size/composition) less the higher of 30% of the family's monthly adjusted gross income or 10% of the family's monthly gross income.

The family's share for rent plus utilities is determined by a formula affected by the payment standard, the gross rent (rent to owner plus utilities paid by the tenant) and the family's income. New families to the program or a family who is moving to a new unit cannot pay more than 40% of their monthly adjusted income towards the gross if the gross rent is above the payment standard.

If the family chooses a unit for which the gross rent is at or less than the family's payment standard, the family's share of the gross rent will be the "minimum rent" payment of the higher of 30% of monthly adjusted income or 10% of monthly gross income. If the gross rent is above the payment standard the family will pay the "minimum rent" payment plus the amount above the payment standard.

The current Payment Standard Schedule by bedroom size is as follows:

0	1	2	3	4	5
\$706	\$845	\$995	\$1,347	\$1,457	\$1,675

### Where a family can live

Program participants are permitted to choose where they want to live as long as they meet program requirements. They can choose to remain where they are or move to another neighborhood. The tenant-based subsidy is "invisible" so the assisted family is not identified as "low income" by their unit and can thereby blend into the community. The program does not concentrate assisted families into "projects" which would readily identify the family as a "low income" family within the community. The subsidy moves with the family and after the family ends their participation with the program, the subsidy in the form of the Housing Choice Voucher is issued to another eligible family from the Section 8 waiting list.

The Program utilizes existing housing stock, i.e. available private rental units in the community and makes direct payments to the landlord on behalf of the eligible tenant. This payment will equal the difference between the tenant's share of the rent and the rent of the unit.

### Annual Reexamination and Annual HQS

Once the family begins receiving rental assistance, a reexamination of the family's income and family composition is conducted at least once annually by the family's assigned Section 8 examiner. The rental unit is also inspected prior to initial approval of rental assistance and at least once annually thereafter by a Section 8 Inspector to assure that the unit meets the Housing Quality Standards set by HUD.